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NEW ENGLAND PEABODY HOME  
FOR  
CRIPPLED CHILDREN

5579 a 195





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The New England Peabody Home,

FOR

CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

(Incorporated 1895.)

Beaver Street,

HYDE PARK, MASSACHUSETTS.



D. Livermore.

June 10, 1907 ✓

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# THE STORY OF THE NEW ENGLAND PEABODY HOME FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

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Every noble achievement and beneficent work has had its beginning in the individual effort of some good man or woman, whose life purpose has been to give help and strength to the suffering and weak of the world.

About ten years ago one cold, bleak winter's day, Mrs. Harriet M. Peabody, while on her round of work among the poor who live in that wretched quarter of the city known as the "slums"—a vague territory bounded by poverty, infirmity, helplessness and hopelessness—had a very pitiful case of suffering brought to her notice. A baby waif had been discovered at or near some lady's doorstep and the tiny scrap of humanity had been badly frozen. Amputation was necessary to insure even a chance of life. With that tenacity of existence that is so often found among those least fitted for the life-race, the child lived—mutilated, crippled, forever crippled,—but

it lived. What to do with this child was now the problem to be solved.

From one charitable institution to another Mrs. Peabody went with the baby's story; but there was none which quite filled the needs of the case in question. The Home for Incurables in Dorchester, where there were eleven beds for the incurably ill, might, indeed provide for the physical care of the little cripple, but there was no provision there for the educational training such a child would need. The Children's Hospital in Boston only offered temporary abode during the period of physical disability.

There was no institution where the several needs of this child, or this class of children, could be provided for at the same time. This fact weighed upon Mrs. Peabody's generous heart and busy mind, and she at once began to turn her energies toward the first steps on the way to the establishment of an institution where the deformed and crippled children of the poor could have surgical care, intelligent nursing, such educational training as would enable them to become wage earners, and a *home life* until they were physically and mentally fitted to undertake their practical part in life.

The poor little frozen baby and the generous heart and wise head of a woman were the two primary factors in the gradual building up of the New England Peabody Home for Crippled Children.

This was the sowing of the seed,  
This was the dreaming of the dream.

The seed has grown into the fruit of a wide benefaction, the dream has become a reality—a unique charity among charities ; for there is no other which combines physical, mental and moral training in the happy and peaceful round of real home life.



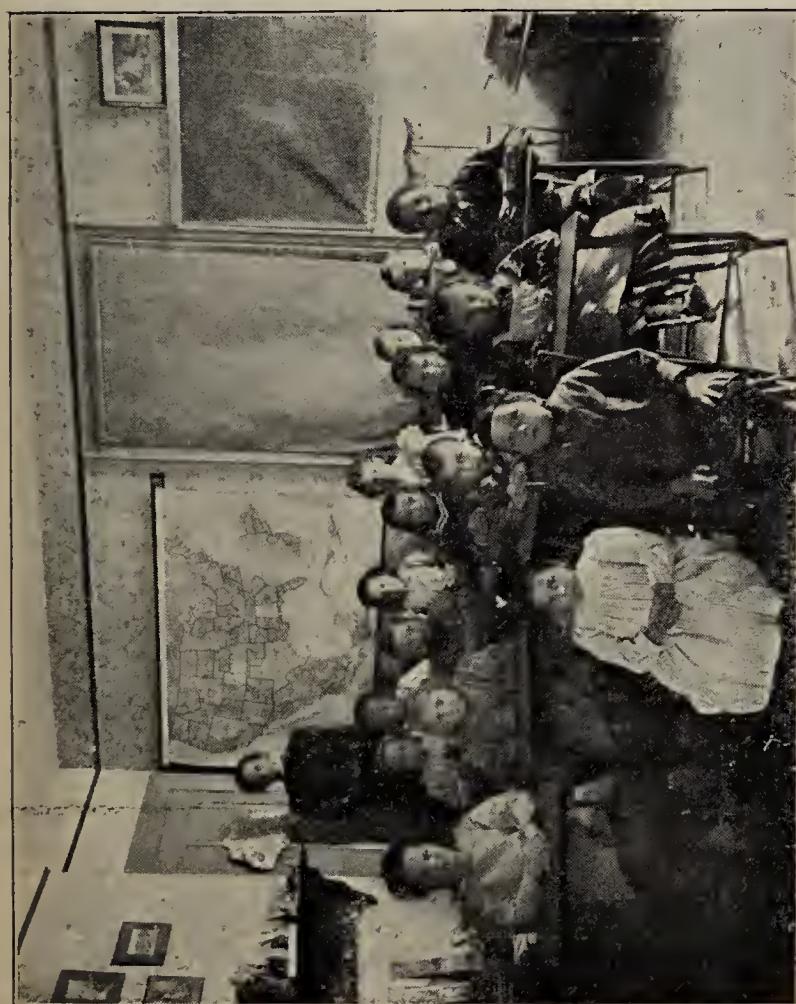
A HAPPY LITTLE PRISONER.

Many friends came forward to give aid and counsel, and in 1895 Mrs. Peabody's idea took concrete form in the opening of the institution (which bears her name) in Weston, from which it was moved to Wellesley Farms. From Wellesley, the institution was moved to Hyde Park, where the Board of Managers purchased a house. This house is not large enough to meet the increasing demands of the home, however, and a new and larger building has become a necessity.

The generosity of Mr. Robert Bleakie of Boston has made the new building a possibility ; for he has given to the institution a large tract of land in Hyde Park adjoining the lot on which the present home now stands. The situation for the new house, which is to be called the Mary A. Livermore house, in honor of the Honorary President, whose name is so widely associated with public benefactions, is an ideal one. Great tall pine trees scent the air with delicious fragrance ; mossy knolls and lichen-covered rocks, with the chatter of squirrels and the twitter of birds in the tree-tops, offer opportunities for the most charming object-lessons in nature, and, at the same time, open a new world to the little pale-faced children, many of whom have passed their lives

within the close walls of tenement homes or on beds of suffering.

The house bearing the legend, "New England Peabody Home for Crippled Children," over its door is cramped and unsuitably arranged for the purposes to which it is now adapted, there being no regular dormitories and no really properly appointed schoolroom for the children; but the



IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

matron's wise forethought and the teacher's tact and ingenuity make up for these deficiencies as far as is possible.

The completion of the Mary A. Livermore House is looked forward to with eager impatience by those interested in the children's welfare, because of the imperative need for larger and better accommodations.

Twenty little children are now sheltered beneath the institution's generous roof ; twenty little children whose young lives lie within the shadow of their crutches ; twenty little white souls waiting to receive the impress of good or evil ; twenty little lives to be trained into usefulness and self-helpfulness !

A sort of balcony bridge has been built from the house now occupied by the children and this bridge extends into the pleasant woodland, forming a level roadway for the small vehicles, the rolling chairs and wheel couches in which some of the inmates pass most of their time.

Here there are awnings to shelter the delicate, invalid cripples from too strong a blaze of summer sunshine, and here the thump of crutch and brace mingles with the chirp of birds and the laughter of children through the fair summer days.

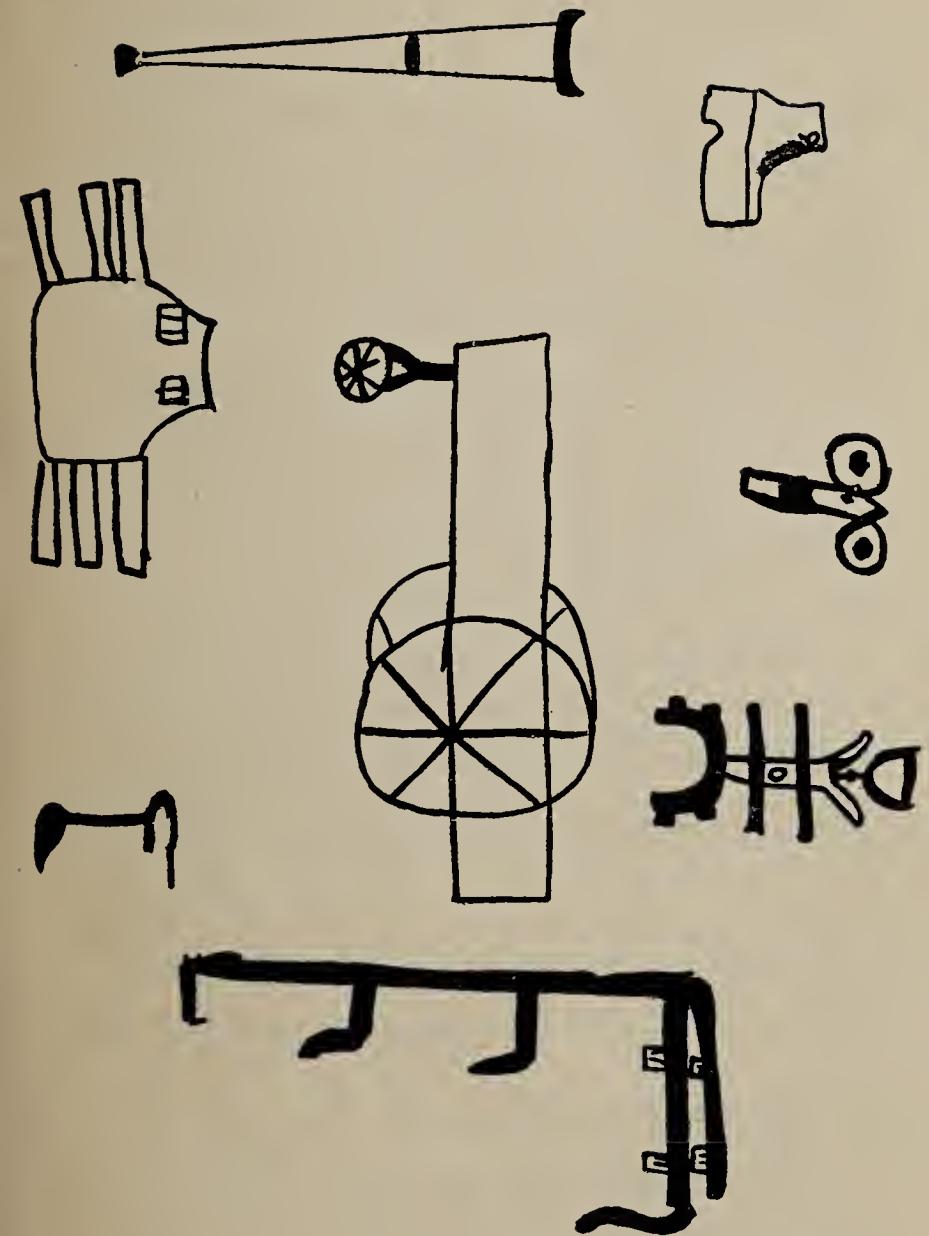


A LITTLE INVALID.

Down in the school-room where Miss Conant, the teacher, reigns supreme, the visitor may find during school hours all of the children who are physically able, busy with slate and pencil, reader and spelling-book, doing their light tasks with eager intelligence; for most of these children possess keen, inquiring minds and are glad to learn. This school training is of the greatest value and gives the institution one of its greatest claims upon public consideration. It was during a forenoon visit to the "Home" that the writer, by way of experiment, asked the children if they would like

to draw something for her. Instantly a dozen pair of hands, black and white, chubby and thin, were uplifted and a chorus of voices cried out, "I will ! I will ! I will !" and there was an immediate demand for paper, and a few minutes later a dozen pictures were handed in. The visitor saw through a sudden blur of unshed tears, a dozen drawings of the things the children knew most about. Every child had drawn a splint or a brace or a crutch ! One little girl timidly put a bit of paper on the visitor's knee, saying, "Does that look right?" It was a picture of the key that was used to wind her leg-brace tighter when it became loose. Another child had made a very neat and accurate representation of the head-strap she wore. Poor little creatures ! The things they knew best were the trade-marks of their infirmities.

"Here is a little girl with a great long memory," said the teacher, pointing to a child who sat near. "Can't you recite something for the lady, Gertrude?" And Gertrude, thus introduced, hobbled forward and repeated almost the whole of "Paul Revere's Midnight Ride." This was remarkable, considering that she had learned it from



SYMBOLS OF THEIR INFIRMITIES.  
DRAWN BY THE LITTLE PATIENTS.

hearing another older girl recite it, and had had no other coaching.

Sometimes these strange human atoms ask curious questions. Black Willie is perplexed about the complexion of the angels. "When I die will I turn white?" is his constant question. Perhaps this is because there are no pictures of black-faced angels in the picture books, but at all events, he is troubled about the matter. Another child knows "that there aren't any crippled children in heaven, 'cause you don't need crutches when you have got wings and can fly." Little Mary is a clear reasoner.

Upstairs where the children are who have to lie with their distorted limbs strapped down to the queer looking wheel-beds, there is a gentle little girl who can only lie on one side and in one position. To the question, "Will she ever get well?" the nurse answers gently in a whisper, "That is a hopeless case. We only try to make her as comfortable as we can."

"How did it happen?"

"She fell down and got hurt and they had no doctor. There was a large family and she had to help in the housework, small and frail as she was. Spinal trouble came

on and now—now she will grow up strong and well—in Heaven!"

Just opposite, sweet-faced Mabel prattles away in her wheel-bed, and now and then a musical laugh bubbles up in a ripple of melody. Such a mirthful laugh, such a radiant smile, such a cheerful voice! Yet Mabel had been lying there for a long, long time, and the tiny hand holding a bunch of violets is very nearly transparent. And there are sad stories back of these frail creatures. Sometimes it is the story of parental abuse or neglect; sometimes the story of well-meaning but ignorant caretaking, and very often it is the story of a drunken father, an over-worked mother, too many mouths to fill and no bread to fill them! In such cases the invalid child has no certainty ahead except the pauper's home or the grave.

Baby Willie is a yellow haired, chubby cherub who looks the picture of health as he sits on the matron's lap. When "Auntie," as the children call her, put him on the floor it was easy to see why he was there. With a brave effort he crawled away into the adjoining room, dragging a paralyzed leg behind him. "He is not a hopeless case," said "Auntie." "He will walk some

IN THE SICK WARD.



day probably. They do wonderful things at the Children's Hospital where we send our patients for temporary aid. They come back here to stay until they are able to get on without care or nursing."

Willie had crawled back to Auntie's knee

and his big blue eyes were full of curiosity as he gazed at the visitors.

"Where did you get your blue eyes?" asked the infatuated guest.

From Heaven," he answered gravely. And if you ask,

"Where is Heaven, Willie?" he points a fat finger upward and says, "Heaven is on the moon," with baby philosophy.

Suddenly there came the sound of banging desk-lids, a thumping and clatter and flutter from below that announced that the pupils downstairs were about to sing some of their kindergarten songs. Hurrying down, the visitor saw two rows of eager, expectant faces, and two rows of impatient hands all ready to "do" the "Pigeon House" song. At a signal every arm that could be spared from a crutch was lifted in an impressive and realistic "flop! flop!" while a chorus of voices in shrill unison sang,

"My Pigeon House I open wide,  
Coo-roo! Coo-roo! Coo-roo!"

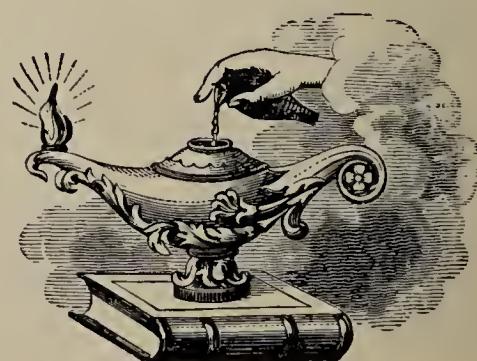
One small bodied, big headed black child was quite dramatic in the role, and all of the children showed evident pleasure in the game.

In view of the fact that this institution

provides nursing, schooling, and a *home* for these children, it is unique in its work as a charity, and should be supported by those who are interested in the welfare of the helpless poor. Since these children are to be trained and educated to become wage-earners in lines of industry adapted to their physical ability, this institution becomes not only a beautiful charity but a great factor in the social economies of the community.

Oh, mothers and fathers of happy, healthy children, thank God for this birthright of your own, and do not forget these less fortunate children of sorrow, whose lives may be gladdened and sweetened by whatever measure of help you of grateful hearts can give !

PAULINE CARRINGTON BOUVE.



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